



Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) Planning Grants Program Guidelines and Application Instructions 2021

Application Due: May 26, 2021

How to Apply Webinars: May 4, 2021 and May 5, 2021 at 2:00pm



PURPOSE

The Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) Planning Grant program is designed to aid localities and nonprofits to better understand eviction prevention needs and to build capacity to mitigate evictions. The goal of the Planning Grants is to prepare Grantees for a future VERP application. For the purposes of these program guidelines, the Virginia Eviction Reduction Program will be referred to as the “VERP Implementation Grant.” Planning Grant Funding totaling \$400,000 is available for a contract period of June 15, 2021 to October 31, 2021.

BACKGROUND

Evictions are involuntary residential moves initiated by the property owners or managers. These are due to the nonpayment of rent, lease violations, the end of lease term, other issues between the landlord and the tenant, or a change in property use. Relative to the rest of the country, Virginia has a high rate of evictions per capita.

Evictions result in housing instability with negative impacts on overall financial well-being for a household, educational outcomes for individuals, and community health, making it essential that Virginia find a solution to reduce its overall rate of evictions.

In 2016, Matthew Desmond, a professor of sociology at Princeton University, released his examination of eviction in America in his book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. His work with the Eviction Lab to collect and analyze national eviction data dating back to 2000 identified areas of the country with the highest eviction rates. Many large cities with the highest eviction rates are located in the Southeast. Five out of the top ten evicting cities in America are located in Virginia: Richmond, Hampton, Newport News, Norfolk and Chesapeake. Petersburg has the second highest eviction rate for a mid-sized city. Localities in Virginia with higher eviction rates tend to have a higher percentage of rental units and more cost burdened renters.

In 2021, Virginia and the rest of the country still face high levels of housing insecurity due to the COVID pandemic. Virginia has responded to this crisis, in part, by providing rental assistance through the Virginia Rent Relief Program (RRP). Localities have also utilized federal and local funds to create their own rent relief efforts administered locally and focused on pandemic response. Virginia continues to address systemic issues impacting housing insecurity beyond the COVID-19 pandemic through its Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot (VERP) which launched in April 2021. VERP utilizes a coordinated systems approach to effectively prevent evictions. This includes creating a collective impact model where organizations that serve as a safety-net within the community collaborate to ensure households have early access to resources to stabilize their housing situations.

The purpose of this Planning Grant opportunity is to build capacity for localities and communities to better identify eviction needs and resources in their communities. These projects will strengthen future capacity for full-scale VERP Implementation grant applications.

FUNDING LEVEL

DHCD will award in total \$400,000 in grant funds for a June 15, 2021 – October 31, 2021 contract period to build eviction prevention and diversion capacity and prepare for a future VERP application. DHCD will competitively award up to eight (8) Planning Grants to local organizations and/or community nonprofits. Each applicant can request up to \$50,000 in Planning Grant funding. DHCD reserves the right to award more or less than the \$50,000 request based on availability of funds and need. DHCD provides funds issued through contracts on a reimbursement basis.

DHCD reserves the right to not fund any submitted proposals and to adjust the funding level awarded and grant period of applicants based on availability of funds and evaluation of proposals.

LOCAL MATCH

Although there is no requirement for local match, Planning Grants may or may not cover the full cost of all planning activities for future projects. Applicants should expect to contribute resources to the planning process in order to develop a successful project. Applications that include local match contributions (both in-kind and cash match) will be given a scoring preference per the state budget directive.

GEOGRAPHIC TARGETING

VERP Planning Grants are available statewide through a competitive application process. Applicants proposing to serve one or more of the following Virginia localities will be given a scoring preference because of their high eviction rates and/or their inclusion in the [General Assembly created pilot diversion program](#):

- Danville
- Petersburg
- Chesapeake

Since Hampton, Norfolk, Richmond and Newport News are priority areas already being served by current VERP Grantees, they are not included in geographic targeting and should not be part of an applicant's service area.

DHCD will fund only one Grantee per locality. Local Planning Grant activities must be coordinated with all local eviction prevention and diversion efforts. Applications not coordinated with other local efforts are ineligible.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

Applicants for the VERP Planning Grants must also be eligible for VERP funding since the goal of the Planning Grants are future VERP applications. Applicants must be a nonprofit or unit of local government. Please note that institutions of higher education may apply in collaboration with a local nonprofit or unit of local government.

Current VERP Grantees are **ineligible** to apply for Planning Grant funds. Previous VERP applicants that did not receive funding are encouraged to apply.

Applicants with outstanding audit findings, IRS findings, DHCD monitoring findings or other compliance issues will not be considered for Planning Grants. Please note that although DHCD will work with all interested parties, where appropriate, to resolve findings and compliance issues, it will be the responsibility of the applicant to assure good standing.

All applicants must be registered in DHCD's Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) and are required to submit one of the following financial documents: Financial Statement; Reviewed Financial Statement prepared by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA); Audited Financial Statement prepared by an independent CPA; or, an OMB A-133 Audit (Single Audit) prepared by an independent CPA. See the table below to determine which document your organization is required to submit.

The threshold requirements outlined below are the minimal standards required by DHCD. All organizations funded by DHCD are encouraged to undertake the highest level of financial management review to ensure practices and procedures are fully examined and evaluated.

Threshold Requirement	Document
Total annual expenditures \leq \$100,000, regardless of source	Financial Statement prepared by organization (does not require preparation by a CPA)
Total annual expenditure between \$100,001 and \$300,000, regardless of source	Reviewed Financial Statement prepared by an Independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
Total annual expenditures $>$ \$300,000, regardless of source	Audited Financial Statement prepared by an Independent CPA
Federal expenditures \geq \$750,000	2 CFR 200 Subpart F Audit - prepared by an Independent CPA

Entities shall file the required financial document in the Centralized Application and Management System (CAMS) within nine (9) months after the end of their fiscal year or 30 days after it has been accepted (Reviewed Financial Statement, Audited Financial Statement, and OMB A-133 Audit only) - whichever comes first.

The full DHCD Audit Policy, including an explanation of the specific document requirements, can be found online at <https://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/Docx/audit-policy/dhcd-financial-statement-audit-policy-2019.pdf>.

At least one representative of the organization is encouraged to attend one of two "How to Apply" webinars in order to be considered minimally eligible to apply for VERP. The webinars will be an opportunity for interested applicants to learn if others in their communities are interested in applying as well. DHCD will fund only one planning grant per community so organizations are encourage to collaborate when there are more than one organization interested in applying for the Planning Grant.

DHCD will contract with the Grantee only. Grantees are held fully responsible for all reporting, submission of remittances, and maintaining all source documentation and program records. Grantees must monitor sub-contractor program compliance, and all state and federal requirements.

PLANNING GRANT DESIGN & ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Planning Grants are available for needs analysis, preliminary program design and capacity building activities in preparation for a future VERP Implementation application. The General Assembly approved a second round of VERP Implementation funding as part of the FY2022 budget. It is anticipated that this second round of VERP funding will be available in fall 2021. Planning Grant activities should focus on at least one of the three components of the VERP program: need, approach and capacity. Applicants will need to describe in the narrative section why they chose that particular focus area(s). All Planning Grant activities must be conducted with maximum participation of residents, potential beneficiaries, stakeholders, and local leaders.

Need

Virginia lacks a statewide, real-time understanding of evictions across the commonwealth. Access to statewide eviction data is important for understanding current eviction trends and measuring the impact of an eviction prevention and diversion program. Needs assessment activities are allowable under this grant for communities to better understand their eviction prevention and diversion needs. Example need-based projects include:

- Community assessments, needs analyses, and need prioritization
- Eviction prevention and diversion data collection
- Surveys of residents, users, customers and potential beneficiaries

Approach

The VERP Implementation Grant requires applicants to include individuals with lived experience in the design and decision-making process. In order to foster landlord and tenant involvement in future eviction prevention programs, Grantees can use their Planning Grant funds for outreach and engagement activities. These efforts will encourage program uptake and tenant participation in their communities. Planning Grant funds can also be used to further develop community work plans and strategies to reduce evictions. Eligible projects under this category can include:

- Tenant/Landlord Outreach and Engagement Strategy
- Work Plans and Implementation Strategies

Capacity

The VERP Implementation Grant requires applicants to develop an assessment tool to identify those households most at risk of housing instability and to have clear policies and procedures that specify household eligibility and program approach. The purpose of the assessment tool is to

determine the type and amount of assistance based on assessment scores. If applicants have already identified their community's eviction prevention needs, they can use Planning Grant funds to develop an assessment tool. If using funds to adapt an existing assessment tool, applicants must explain how the revised tool will be better aligned with their eviction prevention and diversion strategy.

Planning Grant funds can also be used to build capacity in communities where eviction prevention and diversion resources may be disjointed. Some communities may have existing housing instability programs that are not currently equipped to address evictions specifically. Eligible capacity-building activities include:

- Assessment Tool Development
- Mapping of current eviction mitigation assets and a gaps analysis
- Development of cross-organizational programs, policies and procedures
- Eviction prevention training to related organizations

It is not expected that Grantees submit a Planning Grant that touches each of these three categories. When completing the budget narrative in CAMS, applicants should explain why they chose a particular Planning Grant category(ies). Planning Grant funds can be used for mapping current eviction related assets and resources so long as the Grantee explains how the additional funds will make the planning better in line with the VERP Implementation Program Guidelines.

Administrative Costs

Administrative costs may include grants management, accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing reports for submission to DHCD, obtaining program audits, data collection and reporting, similar costs related to administering the grant after the award.

Administrative costs are capped at 10 percent of the grant award request.

Summary of Eligible Activities / Budget Items		
Eligible Activity	Description	Budget Caps (if applicable)
Needs Assessment	Eviction data collection costs, surveys of landlords/tenants, consultant fees	
Outreach	Outreach and engagement activities, surveys of landlords/tenants, advertisement and awareness campaigns	
Capacity Building	Training and capacity building sessions, assessment tool development	
Administrative	Grants management, accounting for the use of grant funds, preparing final reports to submission to DHCD	Up to 10 percent

Matching Funds

There is no requirement for Grantees to provide matching funds to be eligible for the VERP Planning Grant. However, Grantees are encouraged to use matching funds to supplement Planning Grant efforts if DHCD funding cannot cover the full cost of the project.

Planning Grant Advisory Committee

It is important that applicants coordinate Planning Grant activities with other eviction prevention resources in their communities. Each Grantee is required to have significant local coordination through a local advisory committee that will be established by the Grantee for the purpose of this Planning Grant and must include representatives from the following;

- Local government staff leadership (i.e. Chief Administrative Officer or designee, Department Head, staff member, etc.)
- Local CoC
- Workforce Development
- Local DSS
- Legal Aid
- Representative of Public Housing Authority
- Representative of Associations representing landlords such as Realtors and Apartment Management Associations
- Housing Counseling Agency/Program
- Conflict Resolution (Alternate Dispute Resolution)
- Person with lived experience of eviction or housing insecurity
- Organizations representing communities of color
- Tenant advocacy groups (if present in the community)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Grantees are expected to provide DHCD with a final Planning Grant work product. This will vary depending on the type of assistance requested, but Grantees should clearly define the Planning Grant project outcomes in the “Scope of Work” attachment. If applying under the “Needs” category, for example, a Grantee will be expected to submit a copy of their final needs assessment.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications will be accepted on or before May 26, 2021. All applications must be submitted to DHCD through the online application and project management system called [CAMS](#) (Centralized Application and Management System). Please allow for up to two business days for responses to any CAMS help desk request. Applications must be submitted in CAMS on or before 11:59 PM, May 26, 2021.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by a DHCD panel and scored based on the local need (40 points), program approach (30 points), and Grantee capacity (30 points). Applications must score at least 60 points to be considered for funding.

VERP Planning Grant Application Evaluation Criteria		
<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Scoring Elements</i>	<i>Max. Points</i>
Need	Pre-pandemic rate of evictions; targeted localities (see page 3)	40
Approach	Evidence of local commitment to addressing evictions in the service area; community engagement; local collaboration; clear connection between Planning Grant proposal and eventual VERP application; local match	30
Capacity	Experience serving low-income households and providing financial assistance; ability to complete the Planning Grant during the timeframe	30
TOTAL –must score at least 60 points.		100

Please note that DHCD technical assistance is limited to normal business hours.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

VERP Planning Grant applications must be submitted through DHCD’s [Centralized Application and Management System](#) (CAMS). Applicants should carefully follow all instructions for submission. Applications submitted with incorrect or missing information will be reviewed “as is.”

An applicant organization must have a registered CAMS organizational profile in order to apply for pilot funding. Once an organization has an approved profile, individual users may be given access to CAMS by the organization’s profile manager.

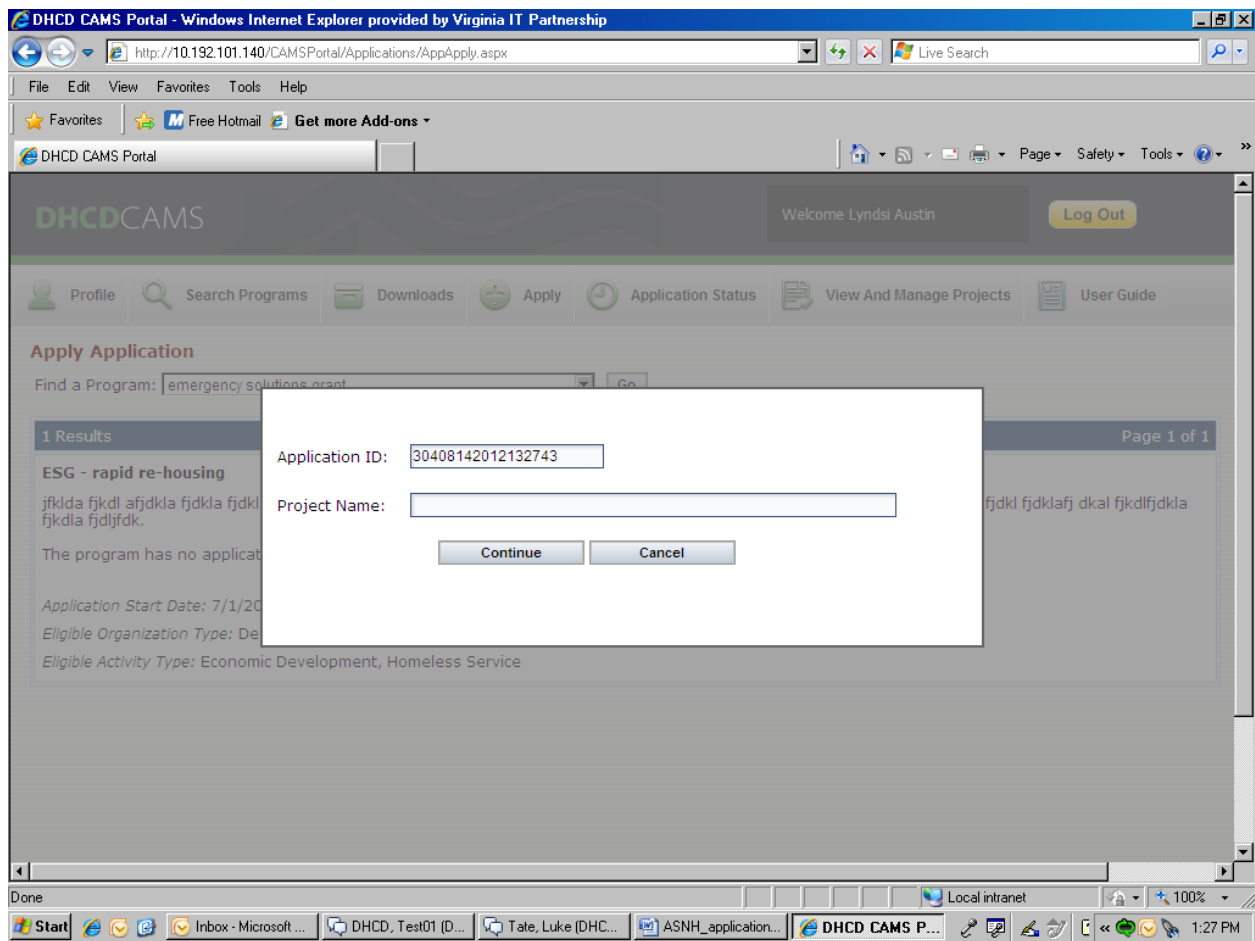
Applicants may submit applications at any time prior to the deadline. DHCD will only review applications submitted in CAMS prior to the established deadline.

CAMS will send the applicant an email notification when an application has been submitted and received.

All work in CAMS should be frequently saved. Please note that Chrome is the recommended browser.

PROJECT INFORMATION

The applicant must login to CAMS and select the VERP Planning Grant application and apply. When the applicant clicks on Apply the system will ask for a Project Name. Please be careful to enter a project name that will help DHCD identify your project. Once the applicant hits Continue the project name cannot be edited. At this point CAMS will give the application a system-generated Application ID number.



Select Continue and CAMS will take the applicant to the Project Information tab. On the project information tab the Organization Name will be pre-populated based on the organization's profile. Please note, any errors or needed updates to the organizational profile must be made by the individual who is set up as a profile manager for your organization.

On the project information tab the applicant must enter the Project Primary Contact information. This is the name of the individual DHCD should contact with questions about the project and their contact information.

Place of Primary Performance is where that project (main office or service location) will be located and the Primary Service Area is the locality(ies) (one or more) that the project is intended to target.

Please note that at this point the page will display a 'Print' option at the top right-hand corner. The 'Print' function will produce a PDF that can be printed or saved. This will have any information that you have entered and saved in the application.

Tip: To print an application that will display all the questions simply go into the "Narrative Information" tab and enter NA into each text box. This will allow you to have a copy of the application including all the narrative questions to work from outside of CAMS.

DHCD CAMS Welcome Lyndsi Austin [Log Out](#)

[Profile](#) [Search Programs](#) [Downloads](#) [Apply](#) [Application Status](#) [View And Manage Projects](#) [User Guide](#)

Application Submission [Print](#)

Application ID: 34305292012094938 Project Name: HPP Test kld 5/29 Program Name: HPP
 Application Start Date: 05/01/2012 Application End Date: 07/31/2012

Project Information **You must click the "Save" button below to save the info you enter in the page!**

Organization Name*:

Project Primary Contact [?](#)

First Name*: Last Name*:
 Title*: Email*:
 Work Phone*: - -

Place of Primary Performance [?](#)

Address*: Zip Code*: - [Whats my +4?](#)
 City/County*:

Primary Service Area [?](#)

Please select ALL localities that will be in your project's primary service area. Only one County, City or Town must be selected to save this page. Select the Add/Edit link to make changes. Selections will display below the County, City and Town sections. When selecting a County, it is not necessary to also select a Town that lies within that county. Consult the application information for this program for additional information.

County: [Add/Edit County](#) No County Selected. City: [Add/Edit City](#) No City Selected. Town: [Add/Edit Town](#) No Town Selected.

[Save](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [DHCD Site](#)
 Copyright ©2012 DHCD

PROJECT BUDGET

The next tab Project Budget requires some basic budget information. Please enter the amount of requested pilot funds in the DHCD Request box and the match amount in the Other Funding text box.

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

The applicant will then go to the narrative questions. Please note there are size limits to the text boxes. DHCD suggests that applicants work in Word and copy and paste into the CAMS text boxes. Word allows an applicant to spell check and check the size of the text prior to copying and saving in the text box. Once the narrative information is complete applicants should print the questions by clicking the Print tab at the top of the page and review them for completeness and accuracy. The applicant is able to edit this information up until the time the application is submitted for review.

Please note that the CAMS text box in this section will only accommodate text responses. Graphic, tables, charts **should not** be pasted into the narrative section; instead, include the information in a separate attachment. The applicant may use the CAMS attachment section to provide any additional information not accommodated in the narrative text boxes.

-Provide supportive housing options for persons with disabilities
 -Assure integrated community housing for persons with disabilities that aid the state's response to the Department of Justice Settlement
 -Other – Clearly state the housing policy this project will impact

This response should explain how the proposed project will address one of the identified state priority housing policies. Direct impact on a priority housing policy is a key factor in the evaluation.

☐ Local Priorities. Describe how this project fits in with local and regional priorities, including how this project was identified, how it aligns with local comprehensive plans, and how the project is supported by the community.
 Describe and document the local housing need, demand and target population that this project will address.

☐ This response should provide specific information on the housing needs, demand and target population that this project will address. The response should describe the type of need that will be met and quantify the level of need. The targeted population should be clearly described and their need for this type of housing should be quantified. Cite marketing studies and other documentation if available. Please attach a copy of any demand studies, marketing plans, and other relevant documentation demonstrating the need and demand associated with this project. For homeownership projects, be sure to include documentation demonstrating a pool of qualified and interested homebuyers. A list of pre-qualified candidates is recommended.

Explain how the project will address the identified state priority housing policies.

☐ This response should explain how the proposed project will address one of the identified state priority housing policies. Direct impact on a priority housing policy is a key factor in the evaluation.

☐ Housing T...
 to be prov...
 this train...

☐ Describe t...
 Describe t...

☐ This respo...
 options for...
 and so for...
 sustainab...

☐ Describe s...

☐ This respo...
 Describe t...
 funding co...
 • Property...
 • Partner...
 • Complet...
 • Regulat...
☐ Develop...
 • Leverag...
 for exampl...

Information does not p...

☐ Describe s...

☐ Outline the...

☐ Actions ne...
 described...

☐ Project Costs. Describe how project costs were determined—entity that derived costs, when, methodology. What assurances can be made to ensure the project is sized and scaled appropriately? Has any value-engineering been completed to explore cost savings?
 Please list each entity involved in the project and describe the role they will play in project implementation and the experience they have in performing that role in other projects.

☐ Each entity involved in the project should be listed along with the role they will have in the proposed project, such as owner, developer, property manager, service provider etc. Outline the experience each entity has in carrying out such a role in other projects. Rental projects are expected to function over 20 years and the involved entities must have the capacity to fulfill their responsibilities for this timeframe.

Project Information | Project Budget | **Narrative Information** | Attachments | Additional Information

Please answer following questions:

Provide a summary of the project, including location, intended beneficiaries and outcomes, and why this project is a priority for the community. Include characteristics that are important to understand the proposed project, such as physical features, land use patterns, demographics, proposed activities including those that will be funded with other resources, but that are integrally related to the Trust Fund activities. Delineate which activities are proposed for Trust Fund funding and which activities will be funded with other resources.

Which of the state housing priorities will this project impact? Describe how the proposed project activities will impact this housing policy. Quantify where possible.

State housing priorities include:
 -Reduce the cost of homeownership
 -Reduce the costs of rental housing targeted at very low-income households
 -Expand permanent housing for households experiencing homelessness
 -Provide supportive housing options for persons with disabilities
 -Assure integrated community housing for persons with disabilities that aid the state's response to the Department of Justice Settlement
 -Other – Clearly state the housing policy this project will impact

This response should explain how the proposed project will address one of the identified state priority housing policies. Direct impact on a priority housing policy is a key factor in the evaluation.

Next Preview Save

Copyright ©2015 DHCD

Specific narrative questions and instructions are as follows:

1. Describe the eviction rate(s) and local needs in the service area you intend to assess with the VERP Planning Grant. How do you know about this need? Include as much detail as is currently known (prior to examining this need further using Planning Grant funding).
2. Describe your organization's strategic vision for eviction prevention. How does this Planning Grant opportunity tie into your organizational vision?
3. Describe your current eviction prevention effort and how this planning grant will help coordinate and improve upon these efforts.
4. Describe your overall community approach to eviction prevention, who is involved, and what role they will play.
5. Include the status of other eviction-related Planning Grant application(s) if applicable. If using this Planning Grant in conjunction with other planning grants, please describe how

additional funding will make the project more aligned with [VERP Program Guidelines](#). Provide a copy of the award letter(s) for funding commitment(s) and date of funding availability in the attachments section of the application.

6. What evidence is there that both the community and local government have the capacity to make progress on this project? Is the local government supportive of the project? Is there community support and consensus regarding the perceived needs?
7. The Virginia Eviction Reduction Pilot requires system-wide investment in addressing evictions through the Local VERP Advisory Committee. Tell us about how you will encourage stakeholder participation and community engagement in your Planning Grant.
8. Please describe how your Planning Grant proposal will prepare your organization for a VERP Program Application. If you formerly applied for the VERP program funding, how will the Planning Grant help you make improvements to your application?
9. Tell us about your organization's experience with preventing evictions, providing housing and financial assistance and services to low-income households.
10. Please describe your organization's capacity to implement this Planning Grant.

ATTACHMENTS

There are a number of attachments required for the application. All attachments are listed on the attachment tab.

Please see the [CAMS User Guide](#) for more detailed instructions (file types and size limits).

Required application attachments include the following:

Application Attachments	
<i>Name of Attachment</i>	<i>Requirement</i>
Scope of Work	An outline of tasks and responsibilities to complete Planning Grant within contract date
Implementation Timeline	A timeline from award date to Planning Grant completion
Optional Attachments	Applicant additional attachments

In some cases, CAMS will provide for only one attachment, such as [Other Funding Documentation](#). This will require that the applicant save multiple sources of documentation as one document/file to upload.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Partners for Better Communities

Project Management
Admin Management
Glossary

Programs | Applications | Attachment Templates

Lyndsi Austin

Application Setup

Select a Program: Housing Trust Fund (HTF) 2015 - 2017 and Subprogram: Competitive Loan Program [To Subprogram](#)

Project and Budget Info | **Narrative Information** | **Attachments**

Enter Required Documents

Project Information | **Project Budget** | **Narrative Information** | **Attachments** | **Additional Information**

According to the program requirement, you must submit/upload following required documents:

Underwriting Template (required)
(to get the template file by clicking [HERE](#))

[Browse...](#)

Property Status and Location Documentation (required)

[Browse...](#)

Marketing/Demand Study or Needs Analysis

[Browse...](#)

Other Funding Documentation

[Browse...](#)

Applicant Financials (required)

[Browse...](#)

Timeline (required)
(to get the template file by clicking [HERE](#))

[Browse...](#)

Partner Commitment Documentation

[Browse...](#)

Additional Attachments

[Browse...](#)

Upload Attachments Instruction:

[Preview](#) [Save](#)

Copyright ©2015 DHCD

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Additional Information tab allows the applicant to provide additional information not previously requested in the other sections of the application.

Application Submission [Print](#)

Application ID: 8805152012161518 Project Name: Test Budget webform kld 5/15/12 Program Name: Urgent Need
 Application Start Date: 12/01/2011 Application End Date: 10/31/2012

Project Information **Project Budget** **Narrative Information** **Attachments** **Additional Information**

Enter optional comments regarding your application in the space below:
 You must click the "Save" button below to save the info you enter in the page!

[Save](#)

[Contact Us](#) | [FAQ](#) | [DHCD Site](#)
 Copyright ©2012 DHCD

APPLICATION STATUS

Applicants may allow multiple users to edit and review application materials. Please note that applicants are fully responsible for controlling security access to CAMS when the application is submitted to DHCD.

Once the applicant begins work on the application CAMS will save the application as Incomplete. The applicant may return repeatedly to CAMS to work on this application. Please be sure all work on the application is saved in CAMS. The application will remain as an incomplete application until the applicant chooses to submit the application. Once the application is submitted the status will change from Incomplete to Pending.

DHCD REVIEW PROCESS

Applicants with unresolved findings from previous DHCD monitoring, audit findings or other compliance issues will not be eligible for a funding commitment.

All applications received by the deadline will be reviewed by a DHCD panel and scored based on pre-determined evaluative criteria (page 7). Applications must score at least 60 points to be considered for funding. DHCD will conduct reviews of all applications submitted by eligible applicants through CAMS.